

98N-1038

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March 12, 2000

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The Honorable Donna Shalala  
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20101

Dear Secretary Shalala:

The enclosed postcards were available at Mississippi Market in St. Paul, a cooperative food store.

I sincerely believe that individuals have a right to know whether the food that they purchase has been subjected to any extraordinary processing, whether it be from exposure to radiation or pesticides.

The special concern that I have about irradiating foods is reflected in the story of the radioactive table posts, which was reported in the news a few years ago: One day the alarms went off at a nuclear facility in the southwest when a truck entered the complex. The problem was traced to one or more cast-iron table supports. The iron had been processed from scrap and among the scrap was a piece of the radioactive source that had been employed in some kind of legitimate medical or scientific apparatus which had outlived its usefulness and had been sold as scrap, which may have taken place in Mexico.

What I want to emphasize is the fact that to introduce radioactive sources as sterilizing agents will proliferate the problem of the radioactive table legs. Who is going to be there when the apparatus is in operation and who will oversee its proper disposal. We cannot take a chance on making a widespread distribution of radioactive material because its disposal will likely be mismanaged.

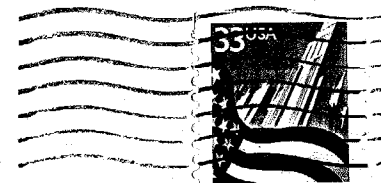
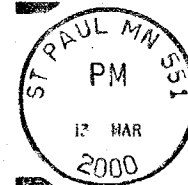
Sincerely yours,

*Frederick A. Fleming*

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